**René Rast claims first win of the season in Zandvoort, Gary Paffett leads the DTM at the halfway point**

**René Rast took his first win of the 2018 DTM season in Zandvoort on Saturday. The Audi driver came in for his mandatory pit stop on the opening lap, before continuing for the rest of the race at the demanding dune circuit on one set of the race tyre, supplied by exclusive DTM partner Hankook. Thanks to the consistently high level of grip provided by the Ventus Race, the reigning DTM champion crossed the finish line in first place after 35 laps of racing. Pole sitter Gary Paffett (Mercedes-Benz) followed him home in second place. This was enough to ensure that the Brit leads the championship going into the second half of what is arguably the most popular international touring car series.**

***Zandvoort/Netherlands, 15th July 2018*** – René Rast started Sunday’s race in Zandvoort – the tenth of the DTM season – from third place on the grid. The Audi man put all his eggs in one basket and came in for a fresh set of Hankook race tyres on the very first lap. This tactic proved to be a successful one for the 2017 DTM champion. When race leader Gary Paffett (Mercedes-Benz), who started from pole, pitted for his tyre change on lap ten, Rast moved to the front of the field. Rast then proceeded to fend off Paffett and take victory.

Second place was enough for Britain’s Paffett to hold onto the overall lead at the halfway point of the 2018 DTM season. Third place went to his fellow Mercedes-Benz driver Paul Di Resta, who tightened his grip on second place in the Drivers’ Championship. The best-placed BMW driver in Sunday’s race in Zandvoort was Philipp Eng in fourth place.

Manfred Sandbichler, Hankook Motorsport Director Europe: “It was a race with different strategies. René Rast, who pitted early on lap one, benefitted from the consistently high level of grip provided by the Hankook race tyre. The Ventus Race once again impressed all race weekend at the difficult circuit in the Zandvoort dunes. It allowed for various different tactics and thus an exciting race with an unpredictable outcome. I am already looking forward to the second half of the DTM, which gets underway in four weeks’ time at the iconic Brands Hatch circuit.”

Audi Sport Team Phoenix completed the fastest pit stop of the race weekend in Zandvoort, in a time of 29.047 seconds. Their reward is 25 points towards the overall standing in the Hankook Best Pit Stop Award.

**René Rast (Audi):** “The Hankook race tyres held up fantastically well. I actually expected that they would start to wear at some point in my long second, 34-lap stint. But that never happened. I am incredibly happy that the Hankook slicks lasted so well and that I was fast enough to hold off Gary right through to the finish and take my first win of the season.”

**Gary Paffett (Mercedes-Benz):** “We had a very good start to the race, but dropped a few seconds at the end of the first stint. That is what cost us in the end. We were very happy with the way the car and the Hankook tyres preformed together over the entire race weekend.”

**Paul Di Resta (Mercedes-Benz):** “We managed the Hankook tyres perfectly and found exactly the right set-up to take full advantage of them. That was the key to our success at this tricky circuit in Zandvoort. That gives us a lot of confidence for the second half of the DTM.”

**Philipp Eng (BMW):** “It was very hot and I was surprised by how consistent the Hankook tyres were over the full distance on this tough track. I locked up once or twice, but that made absolutely no difference. It was once again great fun driving on the Hankook tyres.”

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